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THE BAHAMAS

U.S. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PERFORMANCE PUBLICATION
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FY 2009 FOREIGN ASSISTANCE GOALS

As an archipelagic nation of more than 700 islands less than 50 miles from the United States, the Bahamas faces unique challenges in providing security, health, education, and other government services to its scattered population officially estimated at 342,000. The geography of The Bahamas and its proximity to the United States have historically made the country a key entry point for contraband, illegal drugs, and illegal migrants from Haiti, Cuba, and other Caribbean territories. Access to the United States is easy and frequent, with flights departing approximately every quarter-hour to a U.S. destination.

Due to The Bahamas' proximity to the United States, its position as one of the most popular overseas destinations for U.S. travelers, and its history as an important transit route for illegal drugs and migrants, the United States has a strong strategic interest in a cooperative and stable partnership with The Bahamas. Principal U.S. interests in The Bahamas include ensuring the safety and security of U.S. permanent residents and American visitors, stopping the movement of illicit drugs and illegal migrants through the Bahamian archipelago, combating international financial crime including money laundering and financial support for terrorism, and securing the United States' "Third Border" against terrorism and the transshipment of weapons of mass destruction. With more than four million U.S. visitors, many of whom arrive via large cruise ships, The Bahamas could be an attractive target or transit location for terrorists.

HIGHLIGHTS BY PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

The Bahamas' proximity to the Florida coast makes it an important transit points for the illegal drugs and migrants destined for the United States. U.S. foreign assistance to The Bahamas has supported the Royal Bahamas Police Force's (RBPF) participation in Operation Bahamas, Turks, and Caicos (OPBAT) for over 20 years. Under OPBAT, the RBPF cooperates with its partners in

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the Royal Turks and Caicos Police Force and in U.S. law enforcement agencies to conduct joint operations against drug trafficking organizations.

In FY 2009, U.S. foreign assistance funds provided training on the conduct and management of narcotics trafficking investigations. This assistance has improved the RBPF Drug Enforcement Unit (DEU)'s effectiveness in the conduct of narcotics investigations and in the planning and execution of interdiction missions. Members of the DEU's Marine Unit and Strike Force received operational, maintenance, and safety training. The Marine Unit provides the critical "end game" capability, allowing the DEU to pursue and interdict narcotics traffickers at sea or around The Bahamas' many small islands and cays. In total, 63 members of the RBPF received U.S. Government-sponsored counternarcotics training in FY 2009. Foreign assistance also provided funding for DEU operations at OPBAT bases on Andros Island and Great Inagua. This assistance resulted in the seizure of 2,700 kg of cocaine, 10,747 kg of cannabis, and $3.99 million in drug-related cash during FY 2009.

Foreign assistance funds also supported the training of over 100 Bahamian law-enforcement officers in courses designed to increase The Bahamas' ability to provide tactical training to its own personnel and to other countries in the Caribbean; to increase the Bahamas' ability to manage a mass casualty incident, and detect and disrupt human trafficking organizations; and to enforce intellectual property rights. Over $200,000 in equipment was provided to the RBPF in support of these efforts. Particular emphasis was paid to instructor development, and it is expected that The Bahamas will be a regional leader in police training.